

CT-504

St. Leonard's Shore House  
St. Leonard, Maryland  
Bond Street

ARCHITECTURE

by Merry Stinson

St. Leonard's Shore House (CT 504)

The St. Leonard's Shore House rests on the crest of a long hill rising from St. Leonard's Creek. In its present form, the L-shaped frame building stands two stories high. The original rectangular, one-story house, built c. 1825, faced the creek to the south. Its wide central hall is flanked by a small parlor to the east and a large parlor to the west. Around 1865 the house was raised to two full stories, and a southwest section, forming the leg of the "L", was added. At this time, a galleried porch was added to the inside, or water side of the "L".

The remodeled main section of the house, disregarding the "ell" for the moment, measures four unevenly-spaced bays long by one bay deep. An exterior chimney stands at either end. The east and west ends are un-fenestrated. An east door to the north of the chimney was added in the c. 1865 remodeling. The "roadside" north door has replaced the "waterside" south door as the functioning main entrance. This door was remodeled with sidelights and a transom. It is located in the second bay from the east. At one time a gabled porch sheltered this entrance. 6/6 sash windows light the large parlor on this side while a gib-door lights the small parlor. An answering gib-door opens from the small parlor's south side onto the porch. The second floor's fenestration corresponds to that below. All door and window locations are original, although all but the south door have been changed in size and trim. The south door retains its original interior architrave.

An earlier wing or structure may have stood in the place of the 1865 ell, but if so, it was obliterated in the rebuilding. This wing adjoins

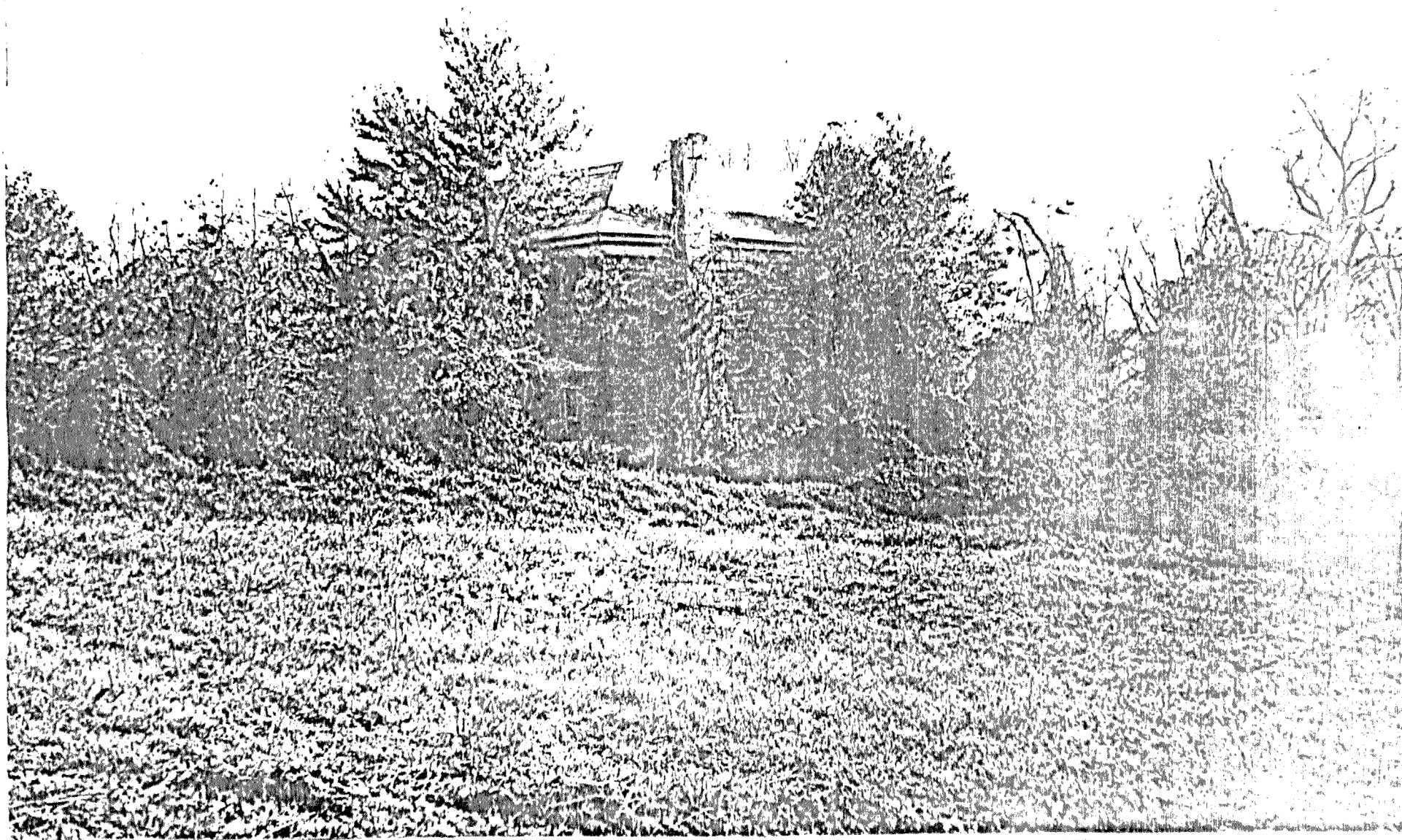


PLATE 39 : ST. LEONARD SHORES HOUSE CT 504. DIRECTION: APPROXIMATELY SOUTHEAST.

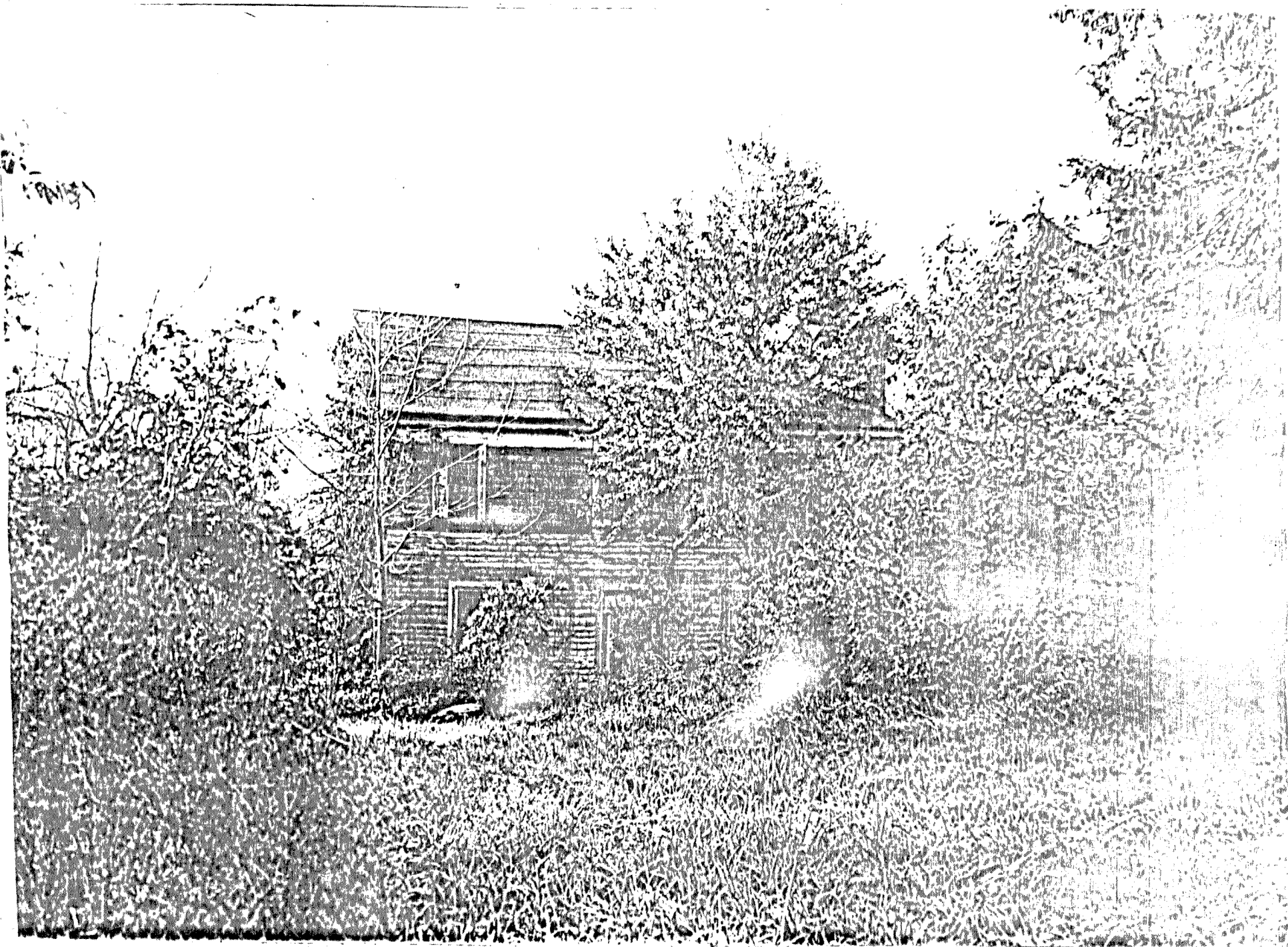


PLATE 40 : ST. LEONARD SHORE HOUSE CT 504. FRONT ELEVATION.

the large parlor's south wall, running south from there. An exterior chimney heats both floors in the wing's west side. Two 6/6 sash windows light the south side. A northern transomed door and a southern gib-door pierce the east side. Similar fenestration appears upstairs.

All exterior architraves feature a quirk-ogee-chamfer molding. Plain, lapped, 6" weatherboards sheath the house. The symmetrical gable roof is hipped at the northwest corner. A wide flat board emphasized the eaves line around the entire house. Windows light the attic's south and east gable ends.

The original house rests on a fieldstone foundation. The ell's foundation is brick. Where the land slopes away from the house to the south, the exposed stone foundation is decoratively galletted. The south end of the ell's foundation is exposed nearly a full story high. A cellar under this section was deepened in two concentric stages.

The ell's shouldered chimney is built completely of brick. The other two brick chimneys stand on stone bases. All three random-bond chimneys feature a two-step water table along their face, and stepped shoulders. The chimney stack still hugs the house above its shoulders.

The interior of the St. Leonard's Shores House, although grandly remodeled c. 1865, retains substantial elements of its original appearance. The original floor plan was retained, including the fine central hall and stairway. The stair runs from south to north along the east wall to a landing across the present front of the house. A short run completes the flight of stairs to the second floor. In the upstairs hall, a winding boxed stair in the southwest corner leads to the attic. Before the house was raised to two stories, it was a tight squeeze to cross the landing, as the eaves line appeared 3' above the landing floor. The landing blocks off the transom of the remodeled front door, rendering



PLATE 41 : ST. LEONARD SHORES HOUSE CT 504. 1865 TWO STORY WING ADDITION.

it aesthetically ineffectual.

The staircase is beautifully finished with scrolled step-ends and a gracefully-tapered round newel post. The balisters were (past tense: much of the stair has been vandalized) rectangular. The side of the stair features refined panelling of molded rails and stiles crossing flat panels. A doorway opens to a closet under the stair (Plate 42).

Excepting the remodeled main door, all the hall's woodwork is original. The doorways leading into the two parlors and onto the porch are framed in herringbone-reeded bands meeting in refined early corner-blocks. The chair rail and a peg strip along the west wall are similarly reeded. The simple beaded baseboard is also intact. The baseboard and chair rail remain in the large parlor except along the remodeled south wall. From the hall a fine 8-panelled door at the foot of the stair opens into the small parlor. This parlor is finished with simpler chair rails and architraves and a plain beaded baseboard. The mantelpiece now lying on the floor, and probably original to this room, is very simply framed.

The "new" ell parlor is separated from the original large parlor by floor-to-ceiling 6-panel pocket doors. Just as these doors slide back into the walls, the top sash of the gib-doors slide vertically into the walls. A quirk-ogee-chamfer molding forms the baseboard. This parlor's exterior door comprises four panels.

All six fireplaces are very small. They are well-constructed with a flat jack-arch head and narrow flue.

The first floor's 9' 9" ceiling height attempts to add grandeur to the small house. The second floor's ceiling height measures 8' 6".

Where the original construction of the St. Leonard Shore House is visible, large hewn members are mortise-and-tenoned together or joined





PLATE 42 : ST. LEONARD SHORE HOUSE CT 504. STAIRCASE WITH SCROLLED STEP-  
ENDS AND REFINED SIDE PANELING OF MOLDED RAILS AND STILES  
CROSSING FLAT PANELS.



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April 7, 1980 approx. 1/8" scale

Floor plan

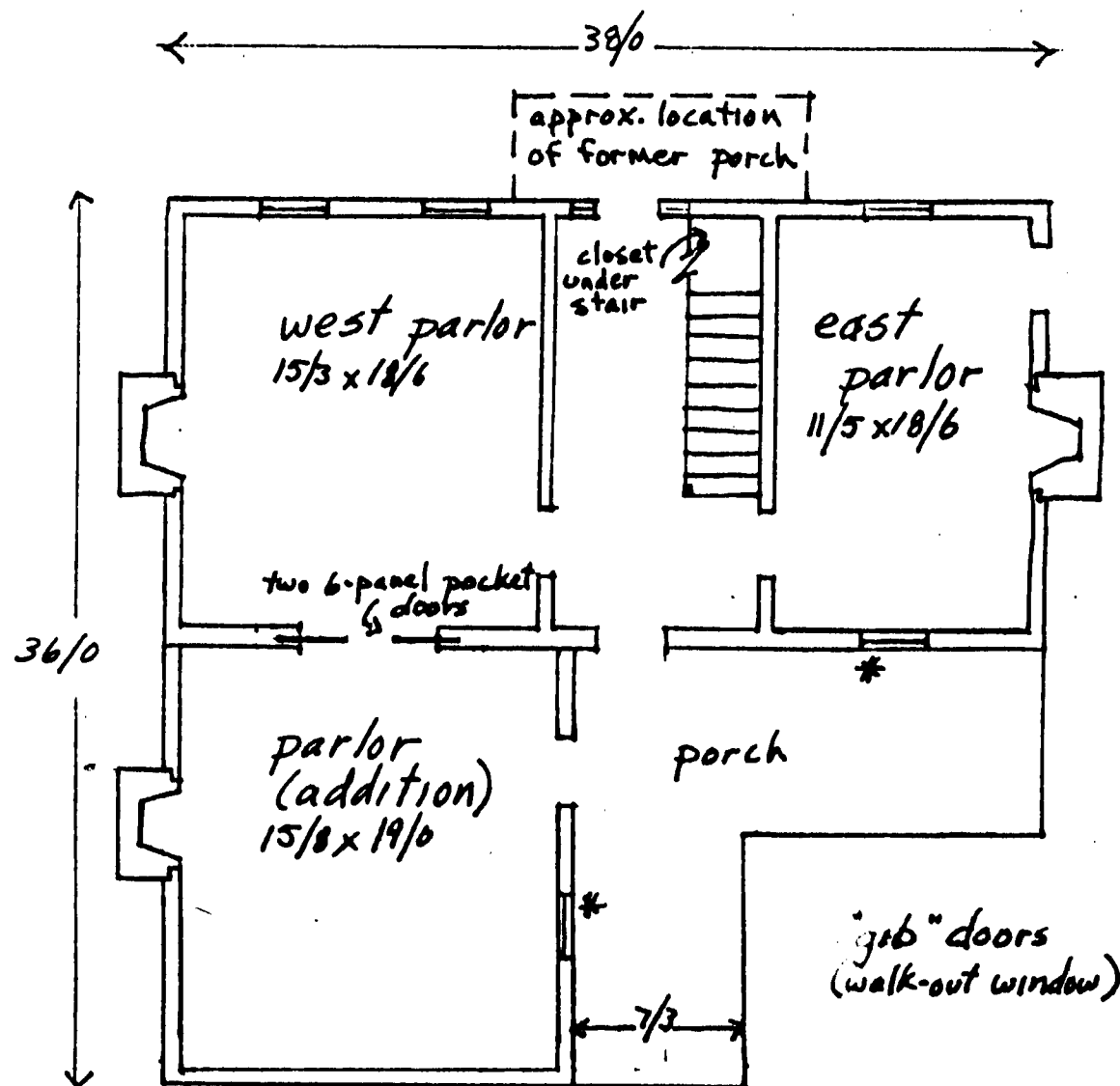
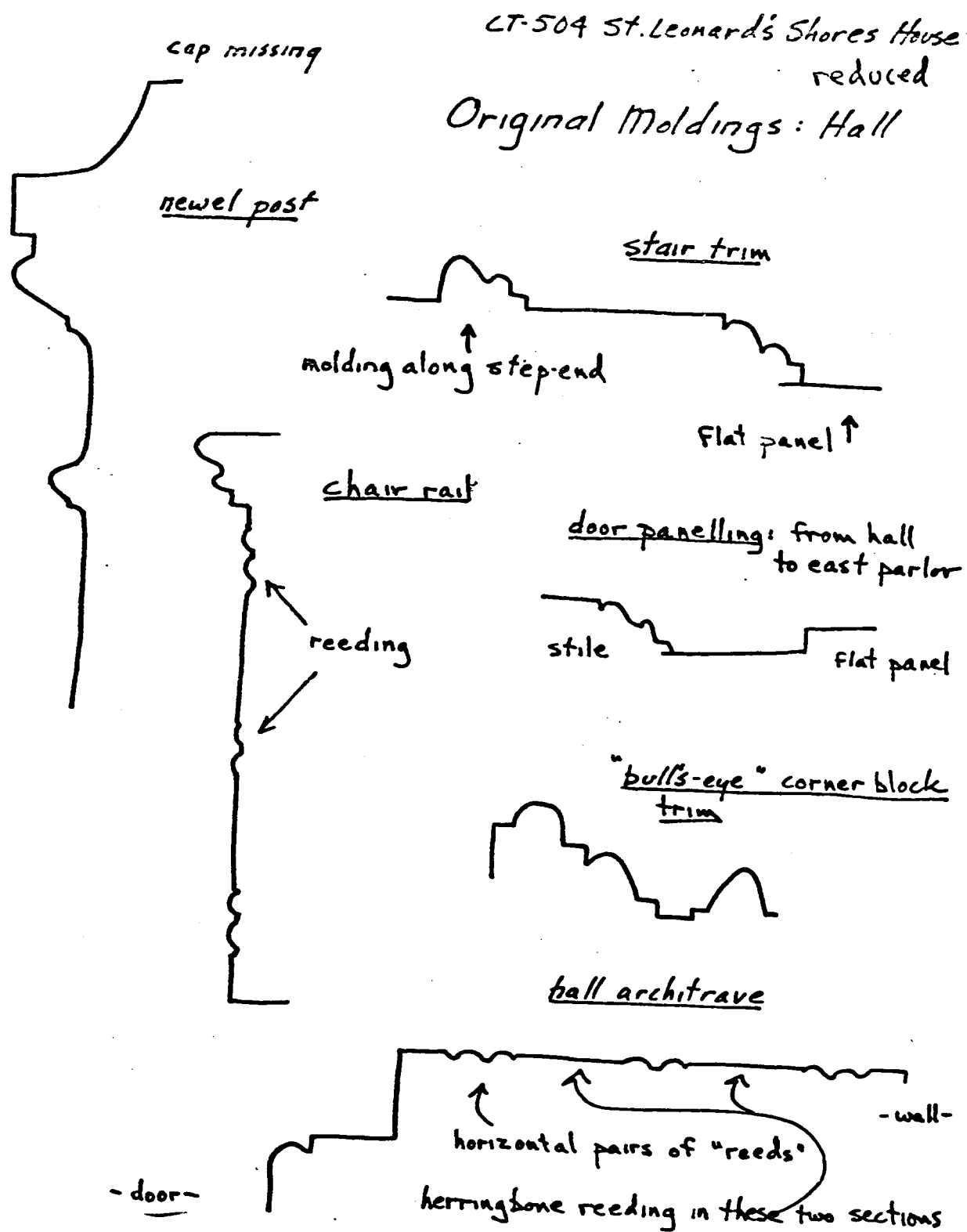


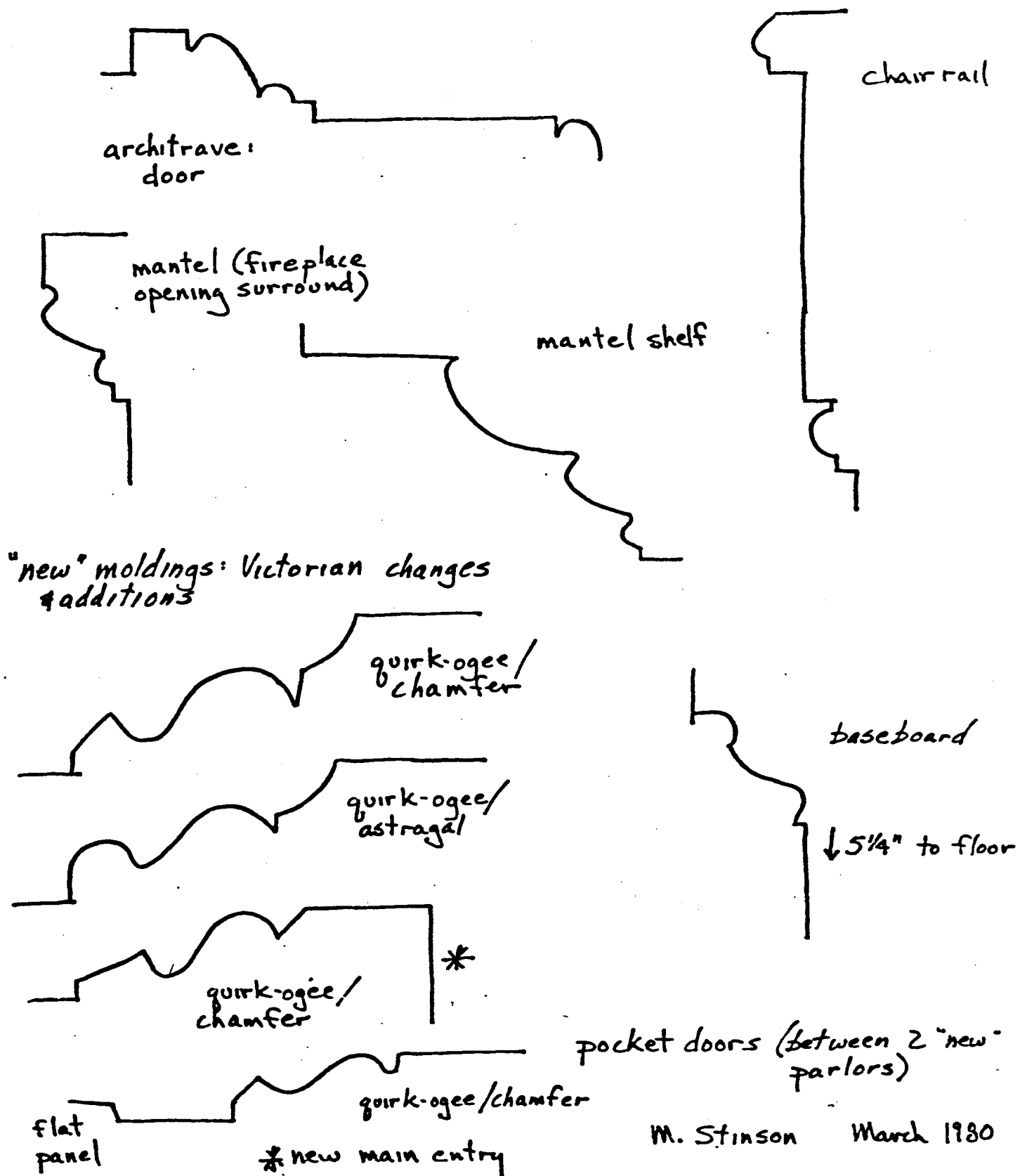
FIGURE 32 : FIRST FLOOR PLAN, ST. LEONARD SHORES HOUSE (CT 504)



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FIGURE 33: MOLDING PROFILES. ST. LEONARD SHORES HOUSE CT 504.  
ORIGINAL MOLDINGS: HALL.

CT-504 St. Leonard's Shores House  
 Original Moldings: Small Parlor (east) reduced



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FIGURE 34: MOLDING PROFILES ST. LEONARD SHORES HOUSE CT 504. SMALL PARLOR (EAST) AND VICTORIAN PERIOD ADDITION.

with early cut nails. In the second floor's east gable end one roof truss from the original one-story house is evident. The original lath below this rafter is riven, while that above the truss, dating from the remodeling, is circular-sawn. All framing members used in remodeling are circular-sawn and joined with mature cut nails.

Significance/Recommendations

The St. Leonard Shore House illustrates the growing pains of the vernacular house in the Federal period. The stylish features of the building include late-Federal elements such as the delicate reeding, and early Greek Revival features such as the refined corner blocks. The pannelling, which once would have been heavier in appearance and subject to vernacular eccentricities, is now light and refined. Such panelling appears in an earlier Calvert County building, CT-66 Rousby Hall (late 18th century), but without the corner blocks. The panelling also appears in a later building, CT-23 Lowrey's Reserve (c. 1845) with similar refined early corner blocks. The St. Leonard Shore House corner blocks are the earliest in the county, seconded by CT-19 His Lordship's Favor (dated 1839).

Two awkward elements of the St. Leonard Shore House are the grand staircase squeezed under a one-story eaves line, and the asymmetrical parlor arrangement. Three other similar houses in the county, CT-299 Ireland House (c. 1830), CT-216 Soper House (c. 1840), and CT-156 Mary Coster House (c. 1840) share the problem of trying to fit a fancy, larger staircase into the old-fashioned, one-story house that has not been enlarged to properly accommodate it. The Soper House, whose staircase features such as overall proportions, panelling, and decorated step-ends resemble those at the St. Leonard Shore House, was also later raised to a full two stories.

CT-29 Cornhill (1780's) shares the large central stair hall and

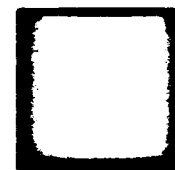
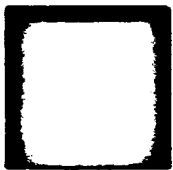
Table 15 : 19th &amp; 20th Century Artifacts from the vicinity of CT-504

| <u>Cat#</u> | <u>QTY.</u> | <u>DESCRIPTION</u>                | <u>DATE</u>    |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| ΔAA         | 1           | Pearlware sherd                   | Late 18th/19th |
| ΔAB-AI      | 8           | flat glass, clear                 | 20th           |
| ΔAJ-AK      | 2           | clear bottle glass<br>(1-melted)  | 20th           |
| ΔAL         | 1           | green bottle glass                | 20th           |
| ΔAM         | 1           | stoneware, white & brown          | 20th           |
| ΔAN-AO      | 3           | square nails(rusted)              | historic       |
| ΔAP         | 1           | oyster shell fragment             | -              |
| ΔAQ         | 1           | red brick fragment                | historic       |
| ΔAR         | 1           | machine cut nail                  | 19th           |
| ΔAS-AT      | 2           | oyster shell fragments            | -              |
| ΔAU         | 1           | purple glass jar frag.            | 20th           |
| ΔAV         | 1           | wire nail                         | 20th           |
| ΔAW         | 1           | iron loop                         | historic       |
| ΔAX         | 1           | stoneware, basal sherd            | historic       |
| ΔAY         | 1           | horse bit(?) fragment             | historic       |
| ΔAZ         | 1           | red brick fragment                | historic       |
| ΔBA-BB      | 2           | oyster shells                     | -              |
| ΔBC         | 1           | pewter button w/ iron<br>shank    | historic       |
| ΔBD         | 1           | blue-edgware, whiteware           | 19th/20th      |
| ΔBE         | 1           | red earthenware w/ black<br>glaze | historic       |
| ΔBF         | 1           | whiteware sherd                   | 19th/20th      |
| ΔBG-BH      | 2           | grey stoneware sherd              | 19th/20th      |
| ΔBI-BR      | 10          | whiteware sherds                  | 19th/20th      |
| ΔBS         | 1           | whiteware sherd                   | 19th/20th      |
| ΔBT         | 1           | green bottle glass                | historic       |
| ΔBU         | 1           | clear bottle glass                | 19th/20th      |
| ΔBV         | 1           | blue edgware sherd                | 19th           |
| ΔBW         | 1           | lead strip/marker(?)              | historic       |
| ΔBX-BZ      | 3           | unidentified iron                 | historic       |
| ΔCA         | 1           | hinge fragment                    | historic       |
| ΔCB         | 1           | iron hook                         | historic       |

asymmetrical parlor plan with the St. Leonard Shore House. In the case of Cornhill, however, an extra window placed in the stair hall facilitates a symmetrical 5-bay, central entrance facade.

Features from the remodelling are found in other county houses. The large double doors resemble those at His Lordship's Favor, and the gib-doors are similar to the one in the Victorian section of CT-224 Archer's Hays (c. 1870).

This house is definitely worth preserving and restoring. It is significant because it has good examples of several architectural styles spanning some 75 years. Federal/Gothic Revival transitional woodwork survives unchanged beside later Victorian changes and additions. In its restoration, emphasis should be placed on preserving its architectural changes rather than restoring the building to any single period.



CT-504  
St. Leonard Shore House  
Cove Point Quad

